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Prices and Rations

434 Detailed information on food rations in Byelorussia is not available, but they are believed to be similar to those in the Ukrainian S.S.R.¹

435 Prices are controlled by the government and price levels vary with the type of market outlet rather than with the type of commodity. In the government ration stores prices are low. In all the main cities, however, there are also one or two special stores, so called "gastronomes", (which are also government operated); these sell unrationed goods at relatively high prices. Their stock consists in large part of luxury items (such as smoked salmon) but some of their commodities are the same as or comparable to those sold in the ration stores. Individuals may therefore supplement their rations of various commodities by purchases at the gastronomes if they are able and willing to pay the price. While the ration stores sold UNRRA food,² the entire stock of the gastronomes comes from Byelorussian or Soviet Union sources.

In addition to these stores, and to the special stores serving factory workers and those supplying extra rations at low prices to war invalids and expectant and nursing mothers, there are public markets in the principal cities. Here country people come to sell the allowed quota of their produce and second-hand goods are bought and sold. Prices resemble those in the gastronomes.

435 The difference in prices between the ration stores and the gastronomes in the summer of 1946 is illustrated in the following table.

1 See Operational Analysis Paper No. 39, Economic Rehabilitation in the Ukraine.

2 In the late spring and summer of 1946 the foodstuffs (with the exception of bread and potatoes) sold in these shops was to a very great extent of UNRRA origin. Some estimates gave the UNRRA contribution as 70 per cent. of the turnover, but this figure has not been confirmed by the Byelorussian Government. Later the UNRRA percentage gradually decreased as the supply from Soviet sources increased.

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TABLE XV
Belorussia: Prices in Ration Stores and Gastronomes, June 1946
(in roubles)

Commodity	Ration stores		Gastronomes	
	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Cheddar cheese	Kilogram	29.50 ¹	Kilogram	280.00
Sugar, granulated	"	5.00	"	120.00
Evaporated milk	14 1/2 ounce can	2.60 ¹	small can	70.00
Canned meat	" " "	17.50 ¹	" "	55.00
Tea	100 grams	5.00	100 gram	22.50

1 UNRRA supplies

Source: UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia, Minsk.

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435 In the same month (June 1946) the UNRRA Mission estimated the average monthly earnings of a semi-skilled urban worker to be approximately 500 roubles, while the average for skilled workers was some 300 roubles higher. Thus the purchasing power of the average worker in terms of free market prices was low; a kilogram of cheese would cost him half a month's earnings. However, many factories operate low-priced cafeterias and factory workers receive priority for clothing and housing. Those who exceed their production quota receive further privileges.

465 The following table gives the average monthly earnings in June 1946 of four Byelorussian factories as reported to UNRRA Mission observers by the factories' managers.

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TABLE XVI465 Average Monthly Earnings in Four Byelorussian Factories, June 1946
(in roubles)

Radio factory, Minsk	1,500
Most skilful workers	800 to 850
Ordinary workers	150 to 200
Beginners	
Hatch and plywood factory, Borisov	
Honour brigade	700
Average for all workers	500 to 600
Lowest paid workers	200 to 300
Cement factory, Vitobak	
One cutter, exceptionally skilled	2,000
Cutters	1,200
Most skilful operators	600
Sewing machine operators	200 to 500
Brick factory, Palotak	
Best workers	400 to 450
All workers	300
Lowest paid workers	250

Source: UNGR. Mission to Byelorussia, Minsk.

435 In September 1946 a decree of the Government of the U.S.S.R. announced an increase in the price of rationed goods and a reduction in commercial prices (such as those charged in gastronomies). This measure was designed to facilitate the abolition at a later date of the rationing system and the establishment of one unified state price for all goods.

465 In order that the increase of ration prices should not fall too heavily on the lower income groups, workers earning less than 900 roubles a month were simultaneously granted a wage increase on a sliding scale, those earning less receiving a greater increase.¹

The latest report received lists the following average wages paid in the U.S.S.R.

1 Increases were as follows: 110 roubles a month for those earning up to 300 roubles; 100 for those earning up to 500; 90 for those earning up to 700; 80 for those earning up to 900.